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**GROSS DISPLAY OF TALENT**

APRIL 22, 2010  
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Paul Gross discusses film funding, Alberta, and his new made-in-Canada movie *Gunless*.

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The average citizen is environmentally aware,  
but governments are dragging their heels.

## 6 dining URBAN DINER STILL NEAR TOP

No two ways about it — the Urban Diner remain's one of city's top dining spots.

**12**screen WILL LEAVE  
YOU IN TRIERS

Lars Von Trier's tale of grief and regret may leave you nauseous, but it will get you thinking.

**15 music CHANCE OF A LIFETIME**  
Vancouver Symphony takes a shining  
to local composer Piotr Grela-Mozeiko.

## 20 arts TIME FOR A NEW TAKE ON GETTING OLD

Playwright Mark Stubbings breaks stereotypes of the elderly in his new play.

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NEWS FEATURE: ENVIRONMENT



ILLUSTRATION BY JAMES ALGER

## THE AVERAGE CITIZEN IS ENVIRONMENTALLY AWARE, BUT GOVERNMENTS ARE DRAGGING THEIR HEELS

BY MAURICE TOUGAS

It began as a modest one-day event to raise awareness of the ecology movement.

Today, 40 years after its first American event and 20 years after it came to Canada and the rest of the world, Earth Day has become an international movement found in 170 countries that helps hundreds of millions become better citizens of the Earth.

But after decades of environmental activism, is the Earth any better off today that it was 20 years ago?

Jed Goldberg, the Toronto-based president of Earth Day Canada, has seen it grow from an organizer of one-day events to wide-ranging, year-round environmental action group.

As Earth Day expanded, the organization found that it wasn't just "the usual suspects" of the environmental movement who were seeking help and information, but the average person.

"We realized that we had this opportunity with Earth Day to really get people engaged with environmental action," said Goldberg in an interview from Toronto.

In his 18 years with the organization, he has seen a substantial change in public perception.

"In the beginning, we were really all about raising awareness of environmental issues, making people understand the challenges we face. Now, average people are very concerned about the environment; they don't have to be convinced that we have a problem. What they need is a focus. We hear that people want to do something, but they are just so confused with all the information that they just don't know what to do, so sometimes they don't do anything."

"Through our programs, we've been able to take their environmental interest and turn it into environmental action."

With financial backing from a number of foundations and businesses (TD Bank, Sharp, Panasonic and Microsoft among them), Earth Day expanded its focus into three areas — education, action, and recognition/financial support.

The EcoKids program is "probably the largest curriculum-based school program in the country," with about 40 per cent of schools in Canada actively involved. The EcoAction Teams program leads Canadians through the process of minimizing their impact of the way they live at home, which includes an

online tool that will give instant calculations on greenhouse gas emissions and money saved.

Earth Day also puts its money where its mouth is with the Community Environment Fund, which provides financial grants of up to \$20,000 to community organizations doing environmental work, while grants to individuals who have done outstanding work in their community. (In 2004, Edmonton high school student Jessica Moe was awarded \$5,000.) The organizational award goes to small, grassroots group who do outstanding work in their community.

But with any retrospective, the question must be asked — is the Earth better off today than it was 20 years ago?

"We've probably taken two steps forward and three steps back," Goldberg says.

While the public is keen on saving the planet, governments are laggards when it comes to environmentalism, Goldberg says.

"There has also been a huge amount of procrastination and inaction that has resulted in environmental degradation. We've made progress, but we've also lost a lot of ground."

In regards to climate change, it amazes Goldberg that there is still some discussion about the validity about climate change research.

The public and business has taken a greater interest in climate change than the federal government, he says.

"The public wants action, they're looking for leadership, but they're not getting it."

This is especially true in Alberta, where the economy is underpinned by industries that are decidedly unfriendly to the environment, says a University of Alberta expert on the ecology movement.

Political science Prof. Laurie Adkin says there are a number of successful environmental advocacy groups in the province — Alberta Wilderness Association, Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, the Alberta Environmental Network, Greenpeace, the Sierra Club — that are "successful in so far that they have simply survived in this environment."

"They have taken on the role that should have been performed by the ministry of the environment."

Alberta's political culture, and the province's "utter devotion" to the oil and gas sector does not lend itself to a thriving ecology movement, Adkin says.

There are no public resources for non-governmental organi-

zations and civil society groups. Even the mainstream media is structured so that there is little room for ecology groups to have their voice heard.

Interestingly, she says, there have been relationships built between environmental groups and landowners in various parts of the province, particularly where there is drilling underway for methane gas.

"Citizen groups — whether they are ranchers or farmers or just citizens downwind from industrial developments — are starting to get an understanding as to how the whole system is rigged against them."

Adkin credits Greenpeace with putting the oilsands front and centre in the environmental debate in the U.S. and Europe.

"The influence of the environmental movement elsewhere has caused the government of Alberta to pay more attention, at the very least, to the image and the public perception of the environmental consequences of the oilsands," she says.

"Before that, the government felt it was only accountable to the local electorate."

But that doesn't necessarily mean the government is doing more about enforcement of environmental laws — it is often a case of money being poured into publicity and public relations, not enforcement.

Across the country, the ecology movement is more influential in Ontario, Quebec and B.C. than Alberta. Environmental organizations have been actively involved in the establishment of a greenbelt in Toronto, or the establishment of a land-use framework in Ontario, and the Quebec government has taken on bold moves in regards to climate change.

Canada has a history of voluntary compliance agreements and ministerial discretion, Adkins says, which means our already weak environmental laws are very poorly enforced. Cuts to environment ministries means they don't have the capacity to enforce the laws.

Despite government foot dragging on the environment, Earth Day's Goldberg is optimistic about the future. Business is way ahead of the government in environmental issues, and business knows there is money to be made from the environment.

He is also optimistic that the coming generation is very concerned about the environment.

"They could go through life with the environment being their key priority, and that's when things happen."

## EARTH DAY • QUIZ

## HOW WELL DO YOU KNOW YOUR ENVIRO-FACTS?

## WHICH HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCE USES THE MOST ENERGY?

- A) Refrigerator  
B) Toaster  
C) Dishwasher  
D) Washing machine

Answer: A – Refrigerators use about 11 per cent of a household's total energy consumption.

**Take Action:** Buy Energy Star endorsed refrigerators. Make sure your refrigerator is set to optimal energy use temperatures (between 2°C and 5°C).

## WHAT HOUSEHOLD APPLIANCE USES THE SECOND MOST AMOUNT OF ENERGY?

- A) Hair dryer  
B) Clothes Dryer  
C) Microwave  
D) Computer

Answer: B

**Take Action:** Whenever possible air-dry your laundry. You can use an outdoor clothes line or purchase a drying rack to use indoors.

Air drying can save \$85 in energy costs per year and help reduce your impact on the environment.

## "PHANTOM CARRIERS" IS A TERM USED FOR ELECTRONIC DEVICES THAT:

- A) Move from room to room  
B) Continue to consume electricity even when switched off  
C) Are really expensive  
D) Are energy efficient

Answer: B – "Phantom carriers" are products that draw power 24 hours a day. Appliances that have a clock or programming displays such as coffee makers, DVD players, computers, printers, and stereos are considered phantom load carriers: 75 per cent of the electricity used to power home electronics is consumed while the products are turned off. Unplug electrical appliances and equipment when you leave the room or use a power bar that connects all of these units and then simply switch the bar off.

## WHAT PERCENTAGE DO HEATING COSTS RISE BY FOR EVERY DEGREE ABOVE 20°C THAT YOU SET YOUR HOUSEHOLD THERMOSTAT IN THE WINTER?

- A) 2 per cent  
B) 4 per cent  
C) 5 per cent  
D) 20 per cent

Answer: C

**Take Action:** Don't overheat your home in the winter. Put on a sweater and dress accordingly in order to save money and to use less energy.

## YOUR RESIDENTIAL WATER HEATER USES \_\_\_\_\_ OF YOUR HOME'S ENERGY AND PRODUCES APPROXIMATELY TWO TONNES OF CARBON DIOXIDE ANNUALLY.

- A) 5 per cent  
B) 10 per cent  
C) 15 per cent  
D) 20 per cent

Answer: C

**Take Action:** Turn down the thermostat on your water heater to reduce energy consumption. Often the level is set unnecessarily high for regular use. If you go on holiday or away for a long period of time, you can turn off the heater since the water does not need to be constantly heated when you are not home.

is home to use it.

## WHAT IS THE MOST ENERGY EFFICIENT CYCLE TO WASH AND RINSE YOUR CLOTHES ON?

- A) cold-cold  
B) warm-warm  
C) hot-cold  
D) warm-cold

Answer: A

**Take Action:** Use cold water to wash your clothes. If every household in Canada did this, it would reduce approximately 1.5 billion kg of greenhouse gas emissions yearly.

## THE AVERAGE CANADIAN HOME IS ILLUMINATED BY \_\_\_\_\_ LIGHT BULBS:

- A) 31  
B) 41  
C) 51  
D) 61

Answer: B

**Take Action:** Use compact fluorescent light bulbs (CFLs) which use much less energy than incandescent bulbs; thus, saving you money.

## A TYPICAL 5-MINUTE SHOWER USES \_\_\_\_\_ LITRES OF WATER:

- A) 50  
B) 100  
C) 150  
D) 200

Answer: B

**Take Action:** Use a low flow showerhead and you can reduce the amount of water used during a five minute shower to 35 litres.

## OVER A PERIOD OF ONE DAY, A SLOW DRIPPING DROPP COULD FILL A:

- A) Swimming pool  
B) Bathub  
C) Drinking glass  
D) Sink

Answer: B – Slow dripping taps can actually be more wasteful than high volume toilets.

## THE AVERAGE CANADIAN USES 36,000 L OF WATER EACH YEAR FOR:

- A) Showers  
B) Dish Washing  
C) Laundry  
D) Toilet Flushing

Answer: D – the average toilet uses about 10 litres per flush.

**Take Action:** Replace your toilet with a low flush toilet or purchase a water displacement dam for your current toilet. Water dams can save up to five litres per flush.

## HOW MANY LITRES OF WATER CAN BE SAVED ON AVERAGE IF YOU TURN OFF THE TAP WHEN YOU BRUSH YOUR TEETH OR WASH YOUR FACE?

- A) 5 litres  
B) 7 litres  
C) 9 litres  
D) 11 litres

Answer: D

**Take Action:** Turn off the tap when not needed, or partially fill up the sink with water to use and plug it. Then turn the tap off so that it doesn't run.

## THE AVERAGE AUTOMATIC DISHWASHER USES \_\_\_\_\_ LITRES OF WATER FOR EACH CYCLE.

- A) 10  
B) 20  
C) 30  
D) 40

Answer: D

**Take Action:** Turn on the dishwasher only

when there is a full load because it uses the same amount of water whether it's full of dishes or not.

## COMPOSTING CAN REDUCE YOUR HOUSEHOLD WASTE BY:

- A) 10 per cent  
B) 25 per cent  
C) 50 per cent  
D) 75 per cent

Answer: C

**Take Action:** Separate your food waste from your regular garbage and recycling. Designate a small household container or bucket for your food scraps and then dump the contents into your backyard compost or green bin daily.

## ON AVERAGE, HOUSEHOLDS WASTE \_\_\_\_\_ OF THEIR FOOD PURCHASES.

- A) 5 per cent  
B) 10 per cent  
C) 14 per cent  
D) 20 per cent

Answer: C – An average family of four people throws out about \$500 per year in meat, fruit, vegetables and grain products. **ONE TREE CAN REMOVE \_\_\_\_\_ POUNDS OF CARBON DIOXIDE FROM THE ATMOSPHERE ANNUALLY.**

- A) 13  
B) 20  
C) 26  
D) 32

Answer: C – This is equal to the amount of emissions produced if a car was driven 17,600 km.

## AS MUCH AS \_\_\_\_\_ OF THE CHEMICALS THAT ARE ADMINISTERED ON OUR LAWNS, GARDENS, AND CROPS TO WARD OFF INSECTS AND PESTS END UP IN OUR DRINKING WATER SUPPLY!

- A) 70 per cent  
B) 80 per cent  
C) 50 per cent  
D) 80 per cent

Answer: C – Pesticides and other chemicals leech into the ground water and contaminate our drinking supply. They can also negatively affect the health of people and animals nearby.

## WHAT TYPE OF FOOD PRODUCTION IS THE MOST WASTEFUL IN TERMS OF RESOURCES USED?

- A) Raising livestock for meat production  
B) Growing grain  
C) Growing fruit  
D) Growing vegetables

Answer: A – Large amounts of grain, requiring high amounts of water to grow, are required to feed livestock while vast areas of land are deforested for pasture areas. **Take Action:** Try to eat meat less often, perhaps one day less a week. There are plenty of meat alternatives available.

## ONE BUSLOAD OF PASSENGERS TAKES THE EQUIVALENT OF \_\_\_\_\_ CARS OFF THE ROAD DURING A TYPICAL RUSH HOUR.

- A) 15  
B) 40  
C) 72  
D) 88

Answer: B – In a year, it also consumes 70,000 litres of fuel, and generates only about 1/3 the greenhouse gas emissions that 40 cars produce.

— Quiz courtesy Earth Day Canada.



## National Volunteer Week

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DINING - URBAN COOL

## Urban Diner Still Near Top



**NO TWO WAYS ABOUT IT — THE URBAN DINER REMAINS ONE OF CITY'S TOP DINING SPOTS**

URBAN DINER  
(780) 433-0091

BY SCOTT LINGLEY

When I asked a friend of mine whose knowledge and experience of Edmonton's restaurants is far more profound than mine where he'd like to go for supper, he barely hesitated before he replied, "Urban Diner."

Now, we're talking about a guy who knows the business from the ground up, has cooked in countless kitchens around town for going on three decades has presided over vast buffets at corporate functions, led cooking courses and even cooked on television. Not only would he be able to say if the tomato sauce on your seafood marinara came out of a can, he'd be able to tell you what make of can opener was used to open the can.

And yet, there we were at Urban Diner. Don't get me wrong — I can only think of positive experiences eating at the Diner, which is bright and comfortable, well attended by experienced staff and puts out consistent food. It was a repeat patron of their breakfast of a summer weekend before the waps came out, both for their fine dark roast and the dessert-for-breakfast marscapone-stuffed French toast with maple-poached bananas.

Anyway, it had been a while since I'd set foot in the ol' UD as we used to call it (editor's note: no one ever used to call it that), but it seemed little changed from my last visit. And some of the people waiting tables even looked familiar, which speaks well of both time-honed skill and employee satisfaction.

It seemed like the menu hadn't changed much — still the tasteful take on traditional diner food — but they were flaunting a rather attractive special in their roast brisket in a demi-glaze with mushrooms, topped with sauerkraut and served with veg and garlic mashed potatoes (\$16). My co-diner for the evening would have that. Much as I wanted to mess with one of the Diner's entrees, I had been

the meal. He praised the demi-glaze — a rich brown sauce made with reduced beef stock, wine or sherry and browned meat and veg bits — and noted that its maker hadn't overused salt to hide potential defects. The topping of mushrooms and sauerkraut didn't conceal the flavor of the beef, and aptly garlicky mashed potatoes served as starch, sauce sponge and condiment all at once. The side veg — grilled asparagus spears and steamed broccoli — were perfectly cooked and appropriate to the dish.

My burger with cheese (\$13.20) was less phenomenal in conception than the special, but turned out to be exactly what I wanted. I savoured the juicy beef patty, the proportionate bakery-quality whole wheat bun and

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dogged by the urge to eat a burger all week and they had an appealing example of the form within easy reach. For variety, I had a house salad (I can't even remember now, and my co-diner checked out the soup with the appetizing name cockaleekie (\$4).

The half order of house salad (\$6) was a nice palate cleanser — mixed greens, shredded carrots, diced tomato and onion in an unobtrusive vinaigrette. My co-diner was positive about the creamy soup of chicken and leeks, but added that he might have caramelized the leeks a bit had he made it.

He was unabashedly complimentary about the special — the meat itself was a perfectly pink-tinged medium rare, but the adornments really made

the appetite slatherings of mustard and mayo (with just a hint of curry?) It was plenty satisfying, and it came with peppered shoestring fries that didn't degenerate into deep-fried husks.

A return visit a few days later allowed me to get reacquainted with their breakfast menu, which includes a tasty huevos rancheros wrap (\$10.50) — eggs mixed with the house vegetarian chili and bound up with cheese in a tomato tortilla, served with potatoes, steamed chili dip and sour cream.

So maybe Urban Diner hasn't changed much in recent years, but when they make enjoying a meal so fairly priced and easy to enjoy, I don't see why anyone should complain.

**EVENT - FESTIVAL  
BEER, GLORIOUS BEER,  
ON TAP AT FESTIVAL**

Whether you consider yourself the king of craft-beers or just a regular Joe Shipack, the fourth International Beerfest's 300-plus beer selection will more than satisfy your craving for new and adventurous suds.

Beerfest's owner and organizer Sean Farmer has seen the event grow every year, and he promises the 2010 edition will be no exception. Expect more booths, more games, more bands, and yes, even more beer. "Just the volume of beers to try is ridiculous," says Farmer. "Take what you've seen in previous years and multiply it by two and that's what we've done this year."

The first Beerfest was held in 2006 in the 3,000 sq. ft. Dinwiddie Lounge, a space Farmer says they "outgrew" in about an hour. Their initial success inspired them to move to the bigger (40,000 sq ft) Shaw. A cross between a festival and a traditional tasting, there will be plenty of attractions to enjoy while you're pacting your vision to beer samplings of the bitter.

You can wash down a fine Scottish stout while listening to one of the eight local bands including The Secretaries and Red Ram; browse craft-vendors while enjoying a Canadian India Pale Ale; or line your stomach with some solids at the food booths. Farmer stresses that the massive selection is meant to inspire not intimidate, and that Beerfest is as much for the casual patron as it is for the beer geeks who could tell you the difference between a Lager and a hefeweizen.

"We try to keep things so that it's lots of fun and really light, nothing stuffy and beer-snobby because that can get a little too much," Farmer says.

"We want people who are just developing their taste in beer to come down and also people who know everything about beer already."

The first runs from April 23 (4-10 p.m.) and 24 (3-10 p.m.). Shaw Conference Centre. Tickets \$15 advance through Ticketmaster, \$20 at the door. Drink coupons are 50 cents.

—Josh Marcelin

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—Enoch Cree First Nation chief Harry Sharpehead, defending his \$180,000, tax-free salary. CBC News, April 20th.

QUOTE OF THE WEEK

## CELLPHONE DRIVING BAN WORTHWHILE

Prudent safety measure, or intrusion on your rights?

The right thing to do, or another example of the nanny state run amok? The provincial government's proposal to ban the use of cell phones while driving is just the type of government action that gets so-called libertarians all hot under the collar.

The provincial government last week introduced a sweeping bill, the Distracted Driving Amendment Act, that bans doing almost everything behind the wheel, with the notable exception of actually driving. Using hand-held cellphones, texting, reading, writing, and personal grooming — yes, that includes putting on makeup on your way to work — while driving a vehicle could draw a rather arbitrary fine of \$172. Hands-free phones are exempt, which has angered some of the more safety conscious who believe that even talking on the phone with both hands on the wheel isn't safe. Dr. Louis Franciscu, Alberta's best-known safety advocate, says there is "absolutely no differ-

ence between an impaired driver under the influence of alcohol, or someone who's talking on a cellphone, whether it's hands-held or hands-free." That seems a little extreme; there seems to be little difference between carrying on a conversation with a hands-free cellphone and carrying on a conversation with a passenger, so allowing the use of hands-free is a reasonable exception.

With or without the hands-free exemption, the bill is a reasonable intrusion on your right to drive like an idiot. Years ago, there was a great hue and cry when seat-belt legislation was proposed. Today, most of us — or at least, most smart drivers — strap ourselves in without a second thought. Perhaps if we crack down on cellphone gabbers, make-up applicators and texters, there may come a day when driving while talking on the cellphone will be as unacceptable as smoking inside has become.

Is it a bit of an intrusion on your rights? Sure, but we have intrusions all the time for the greater good, like public safety.



## A CHICKEN IN EVERY YARD?

Chickens in the backyard? In a big, metro-politan, "world-class" city like Edmonton? Sure, why not?

The city is proposing to allow limited raising of poultry inside city limits. While this may sound like a discussion that might take place in the Hooterville town council chambers, a number of large North American cities allow or are considering allowing the raising of chickens in the city. Calgary is considering a test run of 40 houses that would be allowed six chickens each — but no roosters.

ingly concerned about our food supply, from the treatment of animals fit the homogenization of the taste of our food. Anyone who has ever experienced the startlingly robust taste of a farm-fresh egg will tell you that once you've gone farm fresh, you can never go back. Chickens are benign creatures, and with proper safeguards in place, there is no reason why we shouldn't be allowed to keep a few hens in the backyard for our personal use. Some people will squawk that it's just a fad amongst foodies, but the food revolution is underway, and here it stay.

Bring on the chickens.

North Americans are becoming increas-

POINT OF VIEW - WORDS

## Please, No More Icons



OUTSIDE POLITICS MAURICE TOUGAS  
THE WORD 'ICONIC' HAS BECOME AN ICONIC SYMBOL OF LAZY WRITING

Definitions of the word icon, from the American Heritage Dictionary. A) An image; a representation B) an important and enduring symbol C) One who is the object of great attention and devotion, an idol.

You may have noticed the word icon is used a lot lately. I have, anyway, and now that I have planted that seed in your brain, you'll notice it, too.

I contend that icon is the single most overused, abused and misused word in the English language today. And I'm going to prove it.

Icon is inescapable. I'm a big newspaper reader (yes, there are a few of us left), and there isn't a day that goes by without somebody or something being referred to as an icon. This past summer, when Michael Jackson and Farrah Fawcett died, icon went

into overdrive. You could make an argument that both were deserving of the honourific, Jackson definitely. Fawcett less so (although her famous poster certainly fit the description).

It's not that icon is used incorrectly all the times. There are real icons — Elvis, The Beatles, Jesus — but precious few who are labelled icons these days are "important and enduring symbols" or "one who is the object of great attention and devotion."

It appears almost any entertainer is worthy if icon status. A Canwest news service story referred to Madonna and Ellen DeGeneres as "pop-culture icons." Madonna, "I'll give you, but Ellen? Talk-show hosts are not in short supply.

A description of the closing ceremonies of the Olympics, carried in the Edmonton Journal, spoke of the performances of "iconic comedians" Martin Short, William Shatner and Catherine O'Hara. Aside from the fact that Short did not even appear in the closing ceremonies, and Shatner is not a comedian (although there are comic elements in everything he does), none of them deserve icon status. Another Journal writer knighted Neil Young as an icon. That one, I won't argue. He even looks like one.

The Journal called k.d. lang an Al-

berta icon. Just because she hasn't lived in Alberta for 30 years doesn't specifically exclude her from Alberta icon status, but it's a stretch: Ian Tyson, yes, k.d. lang, not quite yet.

Daytime soap actor Eric Bruden has been called an icon after being a regular on The Young and the Restless for 30 years. Apparently, if you do the same stupid thing for 30 years, you're crowned an icon, rather than a guy who has settled for acting in soap operas his whole life.

The Globe and Mail is big on icons. The Globe called comic actress, national union butcherer and all-around gal Roseanne Barr "a bona fide style icon." Another Globe headline called Don Cherry "the gruff TV icon." Can someone be an icon and a hole at the same time?

Corner Gas, the now departed and much loved comedy series, was labelled iconic. Now, I love Corner Gas as much as the next guy — probably more, actually — but no sitcom can be called iconic until it has been in syndication for at least 10 years, and has made lasting contributions to pop culture. Seinfeld, yes. The Simpsons, absolutely. Corner Gas... well, maybe Canadian icon status pending, but that's it.

There was a story in the Journal TOUGAS cont'd on pg. 6

## BY THE NUMBERS • TAXES

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SOURCE: THE FRASER INSTITUTE





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### POINT OF VIEW - ARENA DEBATE

## It's Corporate Welfare, Folks



HIDDEN NINA FISH GRINKOWSKY

**MORE FLIM FLAM FROM THE  
KATZ GROUP IN THE LATEST  
DOWNTOWN ARENA PROPOSAL**

Once again, Daryl Katz's group has come forward with enticing adjectives like "high-quality" and "dramatic," but still no detailed plan for his multi-dimensional arena project, from design to, so crucially, funding. It's more like a long list of possibilities, should a later whim arise. A covering of bases. Which, if they pay for it all, no worries.

But Katz's \$70,000 rezoning application guarantees none of his ambitious ancillary arena add-ons like bike racks with showers or a car wash will actually be built to supposedly serve us, while the suggestion property taxes from his new buildings will help pay for the Oilers-plex still hangs in the air. Taxes, I will point out for the third time in print, he would owe Edmonton in any case.

Taxes, again, which he has no right whatsoever to direct once he has paid them.

Taxes which would come nowhere near the amount of money he would have Edmonton borrow and spend up front and, once and if repaid, Katz would apparently divert from anything else you can think of that helps run our city. Some examples being general road improvement, beautification, affordable housing and recreation, buses, animal services, policing... well, you get the idea. But his

admission-charging playground gets to be first in line, as was suggested in February.

That's like saying, "I'll pay this downtown parking ticket, officer, but only on condition you spend it pruning trees in my neighbourhood." It's ludicrous. And certainly of some import, it hints at the kind of attitude the city would be dealing with in future interactions with this major institution.

Alarm bells should be ringing in the streets every time the Katz Group avoids talking money — openly edging itself to be the biggest corporate welfare case this city has ever seen. And this is assuming everything goes according to plan which, any architect will tell you, it never, ever does. Man, I can so already hear Katz

He plans, he pays, he passes code, he builds, he hopes.

Yet once again, Katz Group missed the opportunity to legitimately help downtown as a whole by offering up something as simple as free parking — the single solution answer to all this three-decade-old belly-aching since the suburban malls came. Instead, we're fed adjectives about architecture and landscaping for the parkade. The parking proceeds of which go where? Well, you know where.

The league-loser Oilers owner can boost this project's potential till his eyes fall pop right off his face. It's his right. He can commission web sites, try and shift the message and quote-contradict himself in *Journal* editorials about whether he said he'd put

### ALARM BELLS SHOULD BE RINGING IN THE STREETS EVERY TIME THE KATZ GROUP AVOIDS TALKING MONEY

threatening to pull the Oilers' ghost out if we don't play his game, this despite the fact we stupidly paid for him to play it.

Unlike some of the opponents to a publicly-funded, for-profit sports facility around town — and it sure is nice to see a growing and mainstream number of fair skeptics, especially in the media — I'm pretty unconcerned about what happens should Katz find private investors to bankroll this allegedly winning investment. I would not presume to demand his additional shopping complex thrown into open competition with an already suffering downtown should look, so long as he and his employees understand that as consumers we have every right to support it as we see fit. That's how it's supposed to work in capitalism.

money towards the rink, too. He can even hire designers to turn the map of 104th Street into a personal, Jap Kurri-theme park, complete with the Coliseum seating plan colours we all know so well.

Frankly, I hope he makes it legitimately work. It's apparently hopeless out there!

The talking-point parrots in the suburbs who claim Edmonton is generally dying and needs some salvation-by-arena have revealed everything scathing about themselves and their needs. Please note how all that zealot fandom hasn't made them feel connected to Edmonton yet, but they say the rink will do it. If the arena's their last-hope ticket into belonging, so be it. But, brother, can't they pay for it voluntarily then? Because I happen to know we already rock.

### TOUGAS (cont'd from p. 7)

about a Winnipeg guy who won the showcase on The Price is Right game show (apparently, it was a very slow news day in Canada), which was, of course, called iconic. Maybe when Bob Barker was host.

I had to laugh when I saw Edmonton-born eternal teenager and perpetually smiling Bobby Curtola called iconic in the *Journal*. Bobby Curtola iconic? If you can become an icon by singing an execrable tune from the 1960s (Fortune Teller), then our icon standards have fallen too far to rescue.

It's not just entertainers that have achieved icon status. Pretty much anything is considered iconic today.

According to newspapers, you don't even need to have longevity to achieve icon status. Remember those red mittens that were so insanely popular during the Olympics? Yep, they've been dubbed iconic.

Shouldn't there be some kind of time frame for how long you have to be around for icon status? Sports halls of fame have waiting periods; should the icon hall of fame have one, too?

Remember those Fisher-Price "Little People" when you were a kid, or when your kids were kids? A Canwest story dubbed them iconic, despite a warning that they could catch in your child's throat and kill them. Iconic things should not be fatal if swallowed. Another Canwest story called the polar bear the "resilient Arctic icon." OK, that's legit, it is an icon. Grizzly bears were called "an icon to people" by Sustainable Resource Development Minister Mel Knight. Well, Mel, if they're iconic, why do you seem intent on wiping them out?

The Globe, again, referred to the Molson Canadian "I Am Canadian" TV ads as iconic. OK, who remembers those ads today? The Globe also

called Bob Lutz an icon. Yes, THAT Bob Lutz. Apparently, he's an icon at General Motors.

The Canadian snowboarder and Olympic medalist Jasey-Jay Anderson has been labelled a snowboarding icon, Tiger Woods a "bleagured golf icon," Victoria Beckham a "style icon," and Victoria's Secret an "iconic lingerie retailer."

The April 16 edition of Entertainment Weekly used icon or iconic no less than three times in the first 30 pages — Carol Burnett called Tina Fey's character on 30 Rock "almost iconic," Janet Jackson was referred to as iconic, as were the "a string of iconic characters" played by the late John Forsythe.

And now, the Katz group is promising to build "iconic" buildings for downtown. How can you promise something will become iconic? Only time — not lazy writing — defines icons. Or at least, it should.



# The ABCs Of Vegetarianism



**HOLISTIC HEALTHY! ROBERTA SHEPHERD GOING VEGETARIAN TAKES DEDICATION, BUT HEALTH BENEFITS ARE WORTH IT**

Eleven years ago I became a vegetarian. Recently, I was interviewed on the topic by a journalism student, and this fine young lady's questions made me reflect upon my ongoing choice to be vegetarian, how I've benefitted from it, and whether or not I would recommend it to others.

"Vegetarian" is a loose term used to describe someone who has made a choice to limit consumption of animal products. Technically – and trust me on this – lots of people are attached to the sometimes frivolous technicalities of vegetarianism. I was only a vegetarian for one year; currently, I'm a pescatarian, which means that I consume seafood, but not chicken, beef or pork. In Alberta, where Alberta beef reigns supreme, most people are omnivores, meaning they have no formal restrictions on what they choose to eat. A seeming majority of headstrong Albertans proudly claim to be carnivores, implying that they nourish themselves entirely on the consumption of animal flesh.

Other common classifications of vegetarianism are as follows:

- Lacto-Vegetarian: eliminates eggs and animal flesh including seafood, but includes dairy products.
- Lacto-Ovo-Vegetarian: eliminates

animal flesh including seafood, but includes eggs and dairy products.

- Ovo-Vegetarian: eliminates dairy products and animal flesh including seafood, but includes eggs.

- Vegan: eliminates all animal-derived foods including gelatin and honey.

So, why vegetarianism? Besides never being a fan of chicken, beef or pork, I was easily convinced when I read *Diet for a New America*, by John Robbins, an authority on the connections between health, agriculture and the environment. Halfway through the book, I was a newly proclaimed vegetarian. The book was published in 1987, and although updated information exists, it's a great introduction to the reality of the meat industry and the wide range of benefits of vegetarianism. Unfortunately, more recent information reveals much of the same conscience wrenching, deprave, disgusting practices within the meat industry. On meat.org, Paul McCartney, avid spokesperson for PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals), introduces a gruesome cascade of film showing the torturous measures by which animals are kept and slaughtered by saying "If slaughterhouses had glass walls, everyone would be vegetarian." For me, his point is validated by the fact that I immediately clicked away from the site to prevent my usual intense emotional reaction to such images including sobbing and a mortifying, deep feeling of sadness and disappointment.

Clearly, ethical treatment of animals is at the height of my reasoning for choosing a vegetarian lifestyle. It is my strong belief that to maintain good personal health, it is integral to respect the health of the earth and

its creatures. Those who choose to eat meat are neither right nor wrong,

though some can gather solace from purchasing animal products from reputable sources such as local farmer's markets as opposed to your everyday supermarket that supports commercial production. This option allows consumers to question farmers, assuring that animals are free range, free of chemical laden feed and hormone supplementation and raised in an ecological way. The Meatrix at [www.themeatrix.com](http://www.themeatrix.com), an "on-line grassroots advocacy" campaign launched in 2003, is a formidable resource educating the public on issues related to animal consumption and its industry.

More directly relating to health, vegetarians, on average, suffer less as a result of obesity and its related health conditions, cardiovascular disease and cancer. This is because animal products are acid-forming and have high levels of saturated fat. This is not to say that a healthy lifestyle cannot be achieved while including meat in the diet, but rather that moderation is key. In other words, it's more likely that the proclaimed carnivores will struggle with disease over those that pursue a well-rounded diet, including moderate amounts of animal protein... or not. Vegetarians and vegans have equal capacity to create ill health if their dietary regimes focus too much on starch and sugar, neglecting full range nutrition including complete proteins. It's important that those choosing to adopt or maintain a vegetarian or vegan lifestyle pay attention to all the components of good health, including the ingestion of protein and iron that are primarily obtained from animal products in the omnivore's diet.

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SCREEN • FEATURE

## grossdomesticproduct

Actor, director, producer and *Colt .45* expert Paul Gross takes aim on set of his new film *Gunless*. | PHOTO SUPPLIED

**PAUL GROSS DISCUSSES FILM FUNDING, ALBERTA, AND HIS NEW MADE-IN-CANADA MOVIE GUNLESS**

GUNLESS

Directed by William Phillips

Starring Paul Gross, Sheria Gullory and Graham Greene

Opens April 30

BY RANDY BROSKY

"You'll have to move to Israel."

"This was the advice I received from Paul Gross on advancing my career as an actor. And I'm giving it serious thought. It comes from the man whose own career reads like the *Actor's Guide to Thriving in the Canadian Film Industry*. In *Spice of the Canadian Film Industry*. A comparison that makes the star of the 'gone but not forgotten' *Due South* chuckle.

"It's hard," he says about working in our film industry. "It's a screwy system. It's really Byzantine."

I'm talking with him about the upcoming western *Gunless*. We talk a bit about the movie. Working with the horses. The cast who's "a great bunch of people, everybody was really committed and inventive and smart and fun and funny." Indeed, having seen a preview screening, it looks like it was a riot to be on set. Why does Paul think people should see *Gunless*?

"It's really good, and it's balanced and it's beautiful, and I'm now an expert with a Colt .45, and it's full of full frontal nudity." Official words from Gross himself. Although I must have missed the nudity part...

The other thing Paul loved was how simple it was to be 'just

an actor' in this production, after writing, producing, directing and starring in 2008's *Paschendale*.

"*Gunless* was a holiday! I didn't have to worry about how the day was going, or if the camera truck would show up, or if the sun was going down. Hard to shut (that part of my brain) off though... I get a certain mental set that comes over me. Like Pavlov's dog I start thinking about those things. 'We're a little bit behind, we won't get this scene before lunch.' I'm like 'Shut up, it's not your thing to worry about.'"

*Paschendale* is more than just a feather in Gross' cap. It's an example of what decades of hard work and dedication can do, even in an industry-crippled province like Alberta. Over 10 years in the making, *Paschendale* was shot for \$20 million. \$16 million of which was spent here in Alberta. On Albertans. A fact which seems to fly right under the radar of our politicians.

"Alberta faces a particular problem in that its governmental support is eroded badly. It's a very competitive world out there, the whole world is open for business. Alberta's going to fall by the wayside if they don't do something about it." Gross

believes that a united front from Alberta filmmakers, to lobby for government support of the industry is necessary. "It's an enormously profitable, sensible industry to be engaged in. It's the Herculean challenge, however, is getting the government to do that. This means that doing the work is disproportionately difficult. I mean I hate to say it but probably Alberta right now is not the place to be working because there's not enough of it."

So who is Paul Gross? An actor, a writer, a director, a producer? He's a jack of all trades, which he says is essential to anything done. Without the critical mass of work that a location like Hollywood has, you can't simply be just a director or just an actor and 'make it.'

"Producing is not a job I enjoy doing. I hate producing, but if I wanted to do a story about political intrigue in Ottawa with prime ministers, (speaking about the series *H2O*) I had to produce it. Someone wasn't going to bring me that script so I had to write it."

Writing and acting started to grow as separate, though compatible, interests for Gross, while he was here in Edmonton taking his acting training at the University of Alberta. The logic of putting it all together started to dawn on him, even then.

"Fairly early on I thought, I needed to have some outlet, some way of determining my own path in things, more than I could possibly have as just an actor. And in order to do the kinds of things I wanted to do as an actor, I had to produce."

It's been a worthwhile journey. He calls himself exceptionally lucky, though no one who has worked with him would say that he has simply ridden on that luck. He has the reputation of being one of the hardest working professionals in the industry. And contrary to popular belief, gruelling work doesn't necessarily age you prematurely. Gross is about to celebrate his 51st birthday at the end of the month. Hard to believe if you've seen him recently. What does he want for his birthday? "Just a really nice dinner. And world peace."

He's had plenty of other presents, one of which was the opportunity to work with Callum Keith Rennie again. Since meeting on *Due South* they've only worked together on that series about political intrigue in Ottawa, *H2O*.

"It was fantastic to hang out with Callum again. One of the great drives of my life was with Callum in his crazy hot rod. Driving in the middle of the night from Banff to Osageo (the location for *Gunless*). It was absolutely spectacular, he is such a great guy."

That's a fact I can attest to. Although the interview didn't quite work out, I did have the absolute treat of seeing my cellphone ring, answering it and hearing, "Hey Randy, it's Callum." Coolest conversational moment of my life.

So how do we all get to be as successful and famous as Paul Gross? "Producing in general is not easy and in Canada it seems to be uniquely difficult. The most important thing is keep trying to make stuff, by hook or by crook, you gotta make films, make 'em on the weekends, figure out some way to get short films made."

So should we be focus on our own projects or trying to get involved in what's already going on?

"I would say you gotta do both, you sort of have to try and do it all. Keep making pictures. Start working on TV series."

Keep at it. Sure. But what about the money?

"The whole financing paradigm is going through a sea-change." He says there was a time when the CBC would provide 75 per cent of the budget if they thought the project was worthwhile. That time in long past. Without seeking foreign co-producers, the backing just doesn't exist. His next project is a series set in Jerusalem, and will probably be a co-production of four or five different partners, including the U.S. and Israel. "We just can't fund movies the way we used to."

So my career as an actor? How do I get involved in his next production? Gross tells me I have to move to Israel. I tell him I'll be the one standing there with a resumé in my hand looking out of place.

"Okay great, we'll see you there."

Sweet. Anyone want to teach me some Hebrew?

PAUL GROSS

SIENNA GUILLORY



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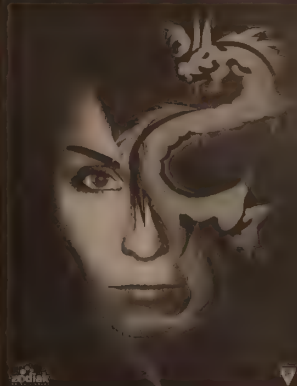
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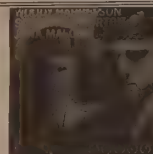
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**QUANTIS**

### METRO REVIEW

## Will Leave You In Triers



Charlotte Gainsbourg discovers the downside to marathon sex in *Antichrist*, a dark tale of parents coping with the loss of a child. (PHOTO SUPPLIED)

### LARS VON TRIER'S TALE OF GRIEF AND REGRET MAY LEAVE YOU NAUSEOUS, BUT IT WILL GET YOU THINKING

#### ANTICHRIST

Written and directed by Lars von Trier  
Metro Cinema, Apr. 22, 24-26, 30 and May 1-3

★★★★☆

#### BY MICHAEL HINGSTON

*Antichrist*, the latest from Danish provocateur Lars von Trier, is the kind of movie you fight tooth and nail against liking. It features such delightful things as genital mutilation, a toddler falling out a window to his death, and a bloodied fox proclaiming, "Chaos reigns!" At the same time, it carries hefty intellectual baggage, wanting to investigate hufalutin notions of mourning, sex, death, and mythology by putting a distraught married couple (Willem Dafoe and Charlotte Gainsbourg) through emotional and physical hell. And yet somehow, despite the massive odds against him, Von Trier man-

ages to pull off this high wire act. I'm as surprised as anyone to be saying this, but *Antichrist* is a daring, devastating achievement. It shocks me far deeper than any film has in years, and made me genuinely nauseous for hours afterward — so make sure you clear your schedule for the rest of the night, because chances are you won't be a very cheery companion.

The film is told in chapters, and opens with Dafoe and Gainsbourg in the midst of a graphic marathon sex session so intense they don't notice their son Nic has woken up from his nap early. He climbs out of his crib, wanders over to an open window, and tumbles onto the pavement below. It's a tragic scene, but Von Trier keeps the audience at arm's length

from the true horror of the situation, shooting in regal black and white and using an overpowering classical soundtrack. This distancing is a crucial strategy we need to not be able to imagine what the couple is feeling, because they're about to go places we can barely fathom.

Grief affects the couple in vastly different ways. Gainsbourg very nearly self-destructs, threatening to kill herself and ending up in the hospital, while Dafoe — who was, by appearances, a distant husband and father — retreats into his more familiar role as a therapist. He meddles with his wife's medication, and eventually convinces her that the best way to push through her grief is to face it head on. So they head back to the cabin where Gainsbourg and Nic spent the previous summer while she was writing their thesis, a labyrinthine, scrapbook-like work called *Gynocide*.

Out in the woods, however, nature is revealed as equally barren and vengeful: everywhere you look are gnarled old trees and hawks ripping baby birds limb from limb. The only symbol of vitality is the constant cloud of acorns that rains down on the cabin's roof like a Biblical plague. It's here that Dafoe begins his home-spun series of experiments to help Gainsbourg with her grief — and here that both spouses realize how damaged and dangerously spiteful the other has become.

There's a whole lot to unpack here, and Von Trier has self-consciously piled on several layers of mythology and metaphor to parse, but on its most basic level *Antichrist* is a harrowing look at the wildly unpredictable process of grieving. Both characters do gruesome things that some critics had zero patience for, but it

all comes from a place that, to me, seems utterly genuine; to take one example, Gainsbourg masturbates on the forest floor, then cuts off her own clitoris with scissors because, for her, sex and death have become horribly and irrevocably intertwined. She loves her body for having created Nic, but detests it because those same selfish desires are the reason he's dead.

The other big charge leveled against the film is that it's misogynist, but I don't quite buy that. Sexism implies that one gender triumphs over the other, and there are simply no winners here. It's mutually assured destruction. If anything, Von Trier is acknowledging the sensitivities of gender politics and using them to up the stakes — the film oscillates several times between which gender can be called the villain, and while Dafoe and mankind may emerge slightly triumphant in the end, the scoresheet has to be a grisly draw.

That being said, the chaos isn't entirely controlled. There are definitely

### GAINSBORG MASTURBATES ON THE FOREST FLOOR, THEN CUTS OFF HER OWN CLITORIS WITH SCISSORS BECAUSE, FOR HER, SEX AND DEATH HAVE BECOME HORRIBLY AND IRREVOCABLY INTERTWINED.

ages where Von Trier seems to be pressing buttons for the pressing's own sake — he did name the film *Antichrist*, after all. And the whole animals-as-harbingers-of-doom angle, while giving the material a nice nudie into old-school fable, still feels a bit undercooked and oblique.

It's not a movie-going experience that anyone in their right mind would describe as pleasurable, yet *Antichrist* fits so many of the adjectives we use to define essential cinema. Bold, unsettling, and unforgettable. You may despise the things that Von Trier wants to show you, but on the contrary, it's all the more reason to take a long, unflinching look — you just might be surprised by what reflects back.

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FREE FILM • COMMENTARY

# A Child's View Of The Chechnya War



FREEDOM OF CHOICE  
FINNISH DOC FOCUSES ON  
CHECHNYA'S CHILD SOLDIERS

Thankfully, it seems political films and filmmaking rarely come equipped with the one-size-fits-all rule of thumb that increasingly hinders contemporary films and filmmakers. Fictional films that address difficult social issues are lucky enough to get made (let alone even attempt serious analysis) while documentary films tackling complex subject matters invariably are ghettoized due to the hot-potato issue under investigation. Ironically, what's gratifying about these limitations is the resulting inherent commercial restrictions create aesthetic exploration and expansion because the anticipated financial returns from these films are consid-

hate and oppression without ever resorting to didactic editorializing or sensationalized presentation.

The film's strychnine structure allows us to journey to an island off of St. Petersburg, where, legions of boys (the majority orphaned) aged 10 to 14 train to become the future soldiers of the conflict. We then travel to Grozny, capital of Chechnya, where we objectively observe the ingrained routine of destruction lived by its inhabitants. The film concludes 4 kms from Chechnya in relative calm as we witness the day-to-day lives of an ordinary family within the region.

What's remarkable about the film is that everything you need to know about why this war is happening is always around the corner of some bombed-out building or in the unimpressive shelter at a highway checkpoint. The incorporation of such a measured and unexpected visual strategy lends a dignity and integrity to the images even though they deal with incompleteness and fragmentation. While focusing in on the children, Hankasalo allows their voices to animate their journeys

FIND THREE ROOMS  
OF MELANCHOLIA  
AT YOUTUBE.COM

erably downplayed. Not necessarily total freedom, but at least a voice whose concern doesn't rest with the bottom line.

The Finnish documentary *Three Rooms of Melancholia* addresses the on-going wars in Chechnya by focusing on the children and the child soldiers who make up both the past, present and future of the conflict. Presented as three distinct segments labeled *Longing*, *Breathing and Remembering*, the film is an individualized impressionistic poem to the innocent victims that make up of the majority whenever wars arise.

Director, editor and cinematographer Hankasalo vividly portrays the energetic repercussions of ancestral

This assigns the film an other-world sense of distance that challenges the viewer to contemplate the silence between the words.

The film can be gut-wrenching to watch because the aesthetic risks that Hankasalo embarks upon enhance the cumulative effect of his intention. The repetition of sorrow that is a conscious visual design enables the film to achieve a trance effect that mesmerizes and spirals into a profound sadness of the heart and soul. There are effectively no answers, the generational hate of brutality is now integrated within the DNA.

*Three Rooms of Melancholia* is hard to shake and will haunt you for days.

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AVANT-GARDE • CANADIAN COMPOSER

# Chance Of A Lifetime



Edmonton composer Piotr Grelła-Mozekko heads to Vancouver for the performance of his orchestral piece "Monumentum." (PHOTO SUPPLIED)

## VANCOUVER SYMPHONY TAKES A SHINING TO LOCAL COMPOSER PIOTR GRELLA-MOZEKKO

BY JERRY OZIPKO

Last October, Edmonton composer Piotr Grelła-Mozekko received a very propitious e-mail from Scott Good, a trombonist and composer-in-residence with the Vancouver Symphony.

"I have some concerts to program in Vancouver, and am interested in seeing if I can get a work of yours on a program," the e-mail read.

The request was totally out-of-the-blue, unsolicited and completely unexpected. As Grelła-Mozekko, a regular SEF contributor, is quick to acknowledge, "This is stuff that dreams are made of, because I didn't have to lift my finger, because it was the orchestra that contacted me."

His chamber orchestra work "Monumentum" (József Köffler in memoriam) will be performed April 24 by the VSO in Vancouver as part of their "Symphony at the Round House" contemporary music series.

These days it is difficult, if not impossible, for all but a select few of Canadian composers to have their works performed by local orchestras. Apart from commissions, Grelła-Mozekko, whose music has been performed around the world, has been extremely fortunate to have garnered at least four performances by a variety of Canadian orchestras that were all requested by their respective music directors (Symphony Nova Scotia, Edmonton Symphony Orchestra [ESO] in 2000, Scarborough Philharmonic and International Symphony [In Ontario]).

"It's a good example of a proactive approach by good orchestras which

are hunting for Canadian works — that are not your typical Canadian works; cheery and accessible in the worst sense of the words," Grelła-Mozekko says.

Edmonton's Tonus Vnus Society for New Music (formerly known as The Edmonton Composers' Concert Society), which has been in existence since 1985, has 46 member composers from across North America and Europe and there are less than a

**THESE DAYS IT IS DIFFICULT, IF NOT IMPOSSIBLE FOR ALL BUT A SELECT FEW OF CANADIAN COMPOSERS TO HAVE THEIR WORK PERFORMED BY LOCAL ORCHESTRAS**

handful who have had their orchestral works performed by the ESO.

This raises an obvious question: Why aren't there more performance chances of music by local composers?

This issue was addressed to composer Allan Gilliland, who served as the ESO's second composer-in-residence between 1999 and 2004, and William Eddins the current Music Director and Conductor of the ESO. Their responses were quite revealing.

Gilliland speaks of his position as composer-in-residence with the ESO as an experience that literally changed his life.

"It gave me access to an orchestra for five years, so I could learn to write for orchestra. It gave me national attention. It gave me a career," he says.

Although Gilliland sat on the programming committee, he didn't feel that he had much influence overall. He admits to being a conservative writer by choice, and says there's a place for that. However, there are

also composers who are masters at pushing the envelope, and trying new stuff!

I think, as my supervisor says in Edinburgh: "There should be room in the garden for all types of flowers," he says.

Gilliland is bothered by the idea of some who feel that if contemporary music is not weird and wacky then it's not new, adding that people would embrace new music more if they judged a piece on its own merits rather than what it isn't.

With reference to local composers, Gilliland feels that "Howard [Bashaw] is one of those people that is hard-wired to write interesting and successful avant-garde music. Whenever I hear his music it really engages me." With respect to programming, he feels that there are limits set by the programming committee, and wishes that there would be some means in place advocating for works by more contemporary and local composers to be performed.

Eddins, who considers Edgar Varèse (pronounced to be a great piece), says, "Every once in a while you've just have to throw this stuff out there."

He observes further that contemporary music is part of the European culture and "is not an imported side stream of their culture." His implication — and quite rightly so — is that that culture has been transplanted on this continent by European immigrants.

When asked why we hear so few works by local composers performed by the ESO, he explains that one of the problems is that "I only know local or live composers in Edmonton. There were dozens of composers hanging out in Vienna at the time of Mozart — we don't know any of them [except for a couple like Salieri]. There's only so much time and way too much music."

Eddins adds that with the inclusion of early music, period instrument and contemporary ensembles, "Everything is a niche audience."

Will Edmonton audiences be listening to works of any of our local composers performed by the ESO in the future?

With internationally known and local composers (who have had works performed abroad) of the calibre of George Antheil, Rembrandt van der Sturp, Thom Golub, Jacobus Kloppers, Isaac Solberg, Charles Stoltz and of course, Grelła-Mozekko, one can only hope. But right now it appears very unlikely that any of them will receive that dream call.



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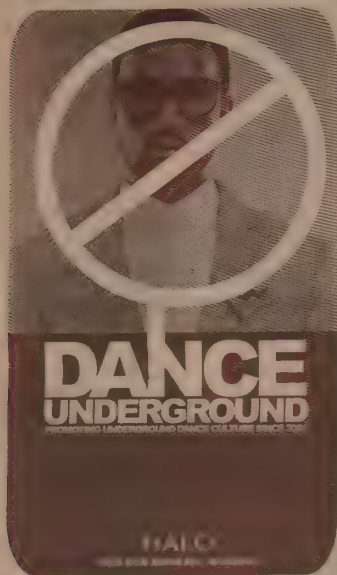
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# MELLOW TUNES - PREVIEW

## Easy Breezy Jon And Roy

**JON AND ROY GET  
IN THE GROOVE AND GO  
TRIBAL ON LATEST DISC**

**JON AND ROY**  
With Wednesday Morning Blues  
Ska-Bara Room, April 22

**BY JOSH MARFELLIN**

Imagine a perfect summer moment: you're on the beach, the sun is setting on the water, and the tang of the ocean gently wafts salt over your warm skin. If you get to experience this every day, it's a good bet your music will be pretty laid-back.

Enter Victoria's Jon and Roy — the musical embodiment of easy, breezy living.

"Victoria is one of those places that is really relaxed and has a certain vibe to it," says singer-guitarist Jon Middleton. "Being around so much nice nature and ocean-side... I think that translates into the music."

Middleton and drummer Roy Visser have been making their island-flavoured blend of folk, reggae, and hip-hop since 2004. In pursuit of musical possibilities and a fuller live sound, they've since added their friends (Ryan Tonelli on the bass and Dougal McLean on the violin and mandolin).

It's tempting to lump Jon and Roy into the Jack Johnson, laid-back guy-with-a-guitar-than-simply, but they have more depth than simple surf-strumming. Widely influenced, Jon and Roy can follow a mellow beach-pop



Victoria foursome Jon and Roy bring the mellow on their third album *Homes*. (PHOTO SUPPLIED)

number with a cover of Outkast's "Elaborate Life," then throw down a funky version of Led Zeppelin's folk-stomp classic "Bron-Yr-Aur Stomp."

"We try to keep it so we're open to different styles and I think that's what keeps it enjoyable for us," says Middleton. "To be able to play a reggae song and then do a hip-hop thing on another."

That versatility is what allowed Jon and Roy to open for Canadian hip-hopper Buck 65 for his 2008 U.K. tour, and then come back to Canada to play stages at the Victoria Ska Fest and the Ottawa Bluesfest.

It could also be why they've been so successful licensing their music to TV and movies — you may have already heard their single "Another Noon" in a Volkswagen commercial, or their track "Di Stylee" on the soundtrack for 2009's surf flick *The Drifter*.

With the release of their third album *Homes* on April 16, Jon and Roy are taking their style-shifting blend on the road for what will be their fifth Canadian tour, and this time around they are planning to throw some tribal style into their grooves.

"We listen to African music, some from Zimbabwe," says Middleton. "You can hear some of that on our new album."

So with a musical style so adept at absorbing new genres, wouldn't it be more democratic to acknowledge their other band-members and call themselves "Jon and Roy and Ryan and Dougal?"

"We've gone so long with the Jon and Roy thing," laughs Middleton. "We were thinking that if we ever went on tour in a different country or something that we'd call our band 'Dougal and Ryan.'"

# CATEGORY - DESCRIPTION

## At Home With Linda McRae

**BARS ARE FUN, BUT HOUSE  
CONCERTS TICKLE THIS FOLK  
SINGER'S FANCY THE MOST**

**LINDA MCRAE**  
With Dave Lang  
Blue Chair Café, April 28

**BY TRENT WILKE**

As we spoke, Linda McRae, her husband, her dog and her banjo were comfortably sitting in a gas station between Somerwhertown and Sideoftheroadville. After years of touring with Spirit of the West and various other bands and solo incarnations, McRae has performed a countless number of shows. True to her folksy fortitude, this hasn't ruined making music for her. After meeting her husband online four years ago (an ex-rancher who has a penchant for poetry), McRae is back on the road again, and has taken along the most important parts of her life with her.

"I'll have some new material coming out soon which is very exciting," McRae says. "My music has been

going through some changes recently. It's now more of a hometown Appalachian folk style but with an edge to it. I use a porch board now as well, which is like a kick drum and it complements my sound with a nice driving rhythm. A lot of people are using them but it takes a real master to use your feet when you are playing. There are people out there doing amazing stuff with effects pedals but I'm not doing any looping stuff. It's all organic."

While in Edmonton she'll be playing in the cozy Blue Chair Café. This up close and personal venue will be nothing new to McRae as she has been playing in various abode like surroundings a lot lately. House concerts, exactly what they sound like, are becoming more popular with the seasoned touring crowd. Playing in someone's home has a very warm mystique to it. In some cases people have transformed their basements to 100-seat venues, but in most cases it's quality rather than quantity. The audience, although sometimes smaller, is far more interested in who they are

watching.

"It's for people who really like music but don't like to go to these bars," McRae says. "In a house concert there isn't any smoking, which is great for me because I quit a few years ago and have since become allergic to it. It's also nice for the presenters whose home you are in because they get to know the artists."

"It becomes a very intimate show," McRae continues. "Since it is a smaller space you tend to make more profit from each show, and at the same time, you get to talk to the audience afterwards. The Blue Chair is like that; it will be close to a house concert. The audience is there because they want to see you, not because someone dragged them out to a bar."

Playing with Regina musician Dave Llang will also add to the friendly ambience as they work on their set list.

"We haven't totally figured out yet what we are going to play," McRae jokes. "But don't worry, we'll have all that decided by the time we get to Edmonton."

## CD REVIEWS



## PLANTS AND ANIMALS

La La Land

(Secret City Records)

★★★★

Listening to the new Plants and Animals album was a little like getting new headphones. You know the feeling, that moment when you slip in the shiny new earbuds and realize there was a subtle layer of sound you'd been missing out on. That's not to say the texture is much denser than on previous albums; but *La La Land* packs some extra punch. The boys rock out from the top with "Tom Cru" and "American Idol" before shifting to a perfect chilled-out vibe on "Jon Tiki." The opening riff of "Futsal from the 80s" gave me serious flashbacks and sent me rooting through old boxes of cassettes. Most of their lyrics aren't extraordinary on an "Jon Tiki" CD. The opening riff of "Futsal from the 80s" gave me serious flashbacks and sent me rooting through old boxes of cassettes. Most of their lyrics aren't extraordinary on an "Jon Tiki" CD.

own, but are rendered profound by the brilliant music accompanying them. And lines like "There's no room in here for us / your righteous ways / righteousness is getting lame" on "Undone Melody" make it clear that Plants and Animals aren't at loss for words.

JEN HOYER



## JON AND ROY

Homes

(Philly Music Network)

★★★★

If Victoria B.C. was to have a soundtrack, its hometown product, Jon and Roy, would be the ideal choice to provide the laid-back vibe it seems to cater towards. Following the critically acclaimed *Another Room*, the lush, folksy Jon and Roy's third release *Homes* invites the summer in an almost initially relaxed way.

From the beginning of the mellow, backwards opener "Any Day Now," to its final melody "Dearfoot," the Victorians sedative and whispery sound accompanies a peaceful feeling akin to Jack Johnson (without making you feel a bit embarrassed for liking it). Jon and Roy play the Staffline Thursday the 22nd and their show promises to make you forget all your worries and forget all your cares.

CURTIS WRIGHT



## DRINK UP BUTTERCUP

Born and Thrown On A Hoe

(The Joy Records)

★★★★

These Philadelphia rockers have generated steady buzz for their high energy live shows, complete with trashcan-pounding percussion and liberal use of marijuana components. And on its debut album, the band does well to capture both the exuberance and the wilderness of their live experience. Especially the wild, carnival rhythms and a heavy dose of the psychedelic male grove like "Seediness Pills."

"Young Ladies" and the Dr. Seuss-y "Dosey Dosey" sound like riffs on off-was caused on chemicals, and the throbbing bass of "Heavy Hand" sounds like Sabbath experimenting with (even more) drugs. But it doesn't seem like just weird for weird's sake. There's a genuine joy that comes across on the songs, an enthusiasm that lifts each sing-a-long chorus from cliché to cozy-tun. The brosed-out "Dosey Head" is simple pop brilliance, as is the shape-shifting lead single "Even Think." As with any trip, there are highs and there are lows, but man, the highs are good. Keep it up, Buttercup.

JOSH MARCELLIN



## MISS EMILY BROWN

In Technicolor

(Kiss Emily Brown Records)

★★★★

There's no guilty pleasure quite like reading someone else's journal. Miss Emily Brown cracks open her grandmother's wartime diary and shares the best bits in *In Technicolor*. We meet a young woman trying to find a date for her sister on the battlefield, and the wife whose husband writes letters from the airfield on "Septuagesima." The album also channels the voices of other wartime women and the communities

they created. Fused with Miss Brown's litigal, folksy voice and the eclectic sound's of indie, autoharp and a music box, the stories make for poignant lyrics and catchy melodies. Rumming through the past helps us move forward with our own future and by the end of the album Miss Brown's grandma has given us all a gift. "She taught us to travel, she taught us to dream / and here we are in great cities attempting great things." With *In Technicolor* Brown hasn't just attempted something great - she's achieved it.

JEN HOYER



## THE JOHN HENRYS

White Linen

(R6 Records)

★★★★

Some records inspire a double-take and *White Linen*, the latest from Ottawa alt-country outfit The John Henrys, is one of them. Taking its cues from the likes of Gram Parsons, Tom Petty and Neil Young, this five-piece has, with its third record, perfected a crisp, clean, and thoroughly organic folk-rock sound. Guitarist,

lead vocalist and principal songwriter Rey Sabatini has the voice of a heartbreaker and an outlaw, augmented expertly by deeply textured, incredibly classic entwining organ, piano, and pedal steel guitar melodies. In fact, speaking of Heartbreakers, album opener "Little" One seems to pay some homage to those Petty brothers, while "Stars Align" is a pop song done Nashville and "Good Man" strays close to ballad territory. An entirely analog recording, *White Linen*'s warm, vintage feel, down-to-earth tones and easy appeal should be all rights have The John Henrys turning a few more heads as the days go on.

ROBIN SCHROFFEL

## LISTEN • BY FISH GRIWKOWSKY

GOGOL BORDELLO  
TRANS-CONTINENTAL HUSTLE

Longtime Gogol Bordello fans may have noticed a slight — and I mean slight — slowing down. Eugene Hutz is just a little less springy these days, and the trademark drum-drumming has tapered. However, there is a specific way this impression benefits the band, which can be heard on this, their fifth record, which happens to be my favorite.

As a Slav I've always enjoyed, though been slightly gypsy of Gogol Bordello's gypsy accentuations. How long can you live in New York City and keep that meaty, ravens accent? Not that it's a huge concern. Hutz and his raggedly-dressed posse on one hit the best shows in the business besides M.I.A., there being maybe three pounds of body fat between the whole band.

But what I love about this seventh album rounds about two facts: It's got some of the silliest, slowest songs the band's ever produced (the maulin' "Sun is on My Side" and "Rebelleuse Love"). And because of this, it's their most realistic sounding, old-school Slavic work. They've traded out the hip-hop spars for an extended hint of the elements played on dolly-covered record players in Baba's basement. For the first time, an album has met the quality of the band's live show. Not to say the whole thing's dragging its line in the dusty floor of a point-in-halfway. It vibrates and pulses: violin-provetes, swagwags with inhabited cowboy hating and even on a sad song like "When Violence Collides" still builds into an exciting violence, fitting its political subject matter. It's not like Gogol Bordello has been a pipe band, or has been taking it so far. But this album is to its credit less silly and more,

well, traditional, which you can best hear on "Uma Minna Uma Gagarin," an amorous blend of cello accordion, Balalaika choir and hand-clapping manning him Hutz. A little maturity is doing the band well, but can't you just imagine them headlining the

Folsy First one day in this city of party Ukrainians?

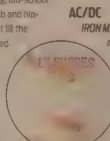
★★★★

THE POLY SHORES  
WHITE FEAR OF WHENTAIL IS TOO ART EP

Calgary scores in overtime again with the hearts-topping

femme-sung, afterpunk EP, which could win in falling among the songs of the *Papo Man* soundtrack and come out the winner. Nearly as relentless as *Duchess Says*, frantic as *Joy Division*, but way easier to hear the words, these two songs completely OWN YOUR EARS as they break-swing through the wastelands. The lyrics are exhaustingly cool, especially when duelled up. "You want to sell it off, we keep on playing, cuz we ain't got no value. We got no money, we gotta steal, we gotta kill for what we got."

★★★★

AC/DC  
IRON MAN II OST

AC/DC's awesome claim III have never put out a studio best-of ends here, oddly enough, with the fucking Iron Man II soundtrack. Don't get me wrong, III put Iron Man's rock in my mouth, but doesn't it just seem a little 2010-waist to only have one band's existing catalogue back your DCI mid-venture? (Actually, The Proposition did this with Nick Cave and Dirty 3 a few years ago.)

Whatever — AC/DC's the new Zeppelin, may as well sit back and enjoy "TNT" and "War Machine" every III seconds of waking life.

★★★★





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## LYRICAL COMEDY • PREVIEW

## Worms Keep Inching Along

EVEN AFTER 20 YEARS  
EDMONTON CONNECTIONS  
STILL RUN STRONG FOR  
ARROGANT WORMSTHE ARROGANT WORMS  
Horseshoe Stage, April 23

BY ANDREW PAUL

Hindsight is 20/20

And as Chris Patterson, one third of Ontario laugh-trio The Arrogant Worms, looks back over the last 19 years he can't help but give Edmonton props for nearly two decades of support and collaboration.

"It was one of the best highlights of our 20 years," he says about *Semi-Conscious*, the band's 2003 DVD collaboration with the Edmonton Symphony Orchestra. "Someone joked during the show about the cow song. It's a two-minute fart joke pretty much, and here we have a world class symphony playing along with it. How did this even happen to us?"

Sounds strange, but that's how the Worms roll, and their relationship with Edmonton is definitely odd.

Thanks to Napster, the troupe's set list has been eternally intertwined with local acts, most notably Three Dead Trolls in a Baggy (TDTB), which featured the comedic genius of Wes Borg and the late great Joe Bird.



The Arrogant Worms get set to celebrate 20 years in the comedy biz | PHOTO SUPPLIED

During the explosion of the online music world the Worms were credited with writing TDTB's "The War of 1812," a song about a failed American invasion of Canada, and "The Toronto," a salute to people's desire for our neighbours to the east.

"The War of 1812" song is the only song we've gotten pretty nasty emails from angry Americans who don't appreciate that sort of thing," Patterson says. "We just forward them to Wes (Borg) and I'm sure he deals with them with all the grace and sincerity you'd expect."

The Worms' credits have also crossed wires with Captain Tractor's cover of "The Last Saskatchewan Pirate." The Worms wrote it first, but continue to get credit for CT's version, the one they play at Oilers

games, and accompanying music video.

"We make an extra couple bucks every year because of that, and by a couple bucks I mean \$2 every year," Patterson laughs. "I can only chalk it up to the fact that Edmonton has a really good live music and comedy scene, so there's lots for people to see and therefore more things to confuse other things with."

As for future projects Patterson is promoting *Small Potatoes*, his first solo endeavor and sojourn into the world of children's music, while the rest of the Worms focus on the completion of *Hindsight 20/20*, a compilation album celebrating their 20-year career.

"The machine keeps chugging along," Patterson says.

## HAWAIIAN TUNES • PREVIEW

## Cut This Guy Some Slack

SLACK KEY SLIM'S SMOOTH  
SOUNDS WILL LULL YOU INTO  
TROPICAL TRANQUILITY

SLACK KEY SLIM

The Carrot, April 23

BY JEFF HOLUBITSKY

Many musicians might be offended if anyone in the audience falls asleep during a performance. They want people hanging on every note, laughing, crying, and dancing.

But when Slack Key Slim straps on his Seagull acoustic guitar at the Carrot this Friday night, he'll feel a certain contentment if his traditional finger-picked Hawaiian songs soothe a few anxious souls into moments of deep relaxation.

"Sometimes I've heard it described as a sweet melancholy," he says. "I call it heavy mellow music and we need more mellow in the world right now."

That music was wildly popular in the early decades of the last century. It's a melding of Polynesian culture and music with the Spanish guitar, brought to the islands in the 1830s by Mexican cowboys.

Rather than following standard European tunings, the Hawaiians loosened some strings to produce different ingenious tunings that were often jealously guarded by families.

"This music is such a deep, deep thing," Slim says. "They may write about a mountain or flower, but really it is about a loved one."

Slack Key Slim wasn't born with such a cool demeanor. In fact, he's journeyman Edmonton musician and songwriter Gary Myers who was trained in Grant MacEwan's music program. He played bass in country bands before heading off to seek his fortune in New York where he spent nine years playing bass for Walter Egan, the guy who sang "Magnet and Steel" with Steve Nicks. Back in Canada he backed Edmonton's defunct Ki Tikat Club, as well as Crystal



Slack Key Slim | PHOTO BY CRAIG HANSEN

Plamondon. He has also taught bass at MacEwan and regularly plays with Edmonton's George Lake, a steel guitar legend back in the islands.

Myers fell for slack key music on a trip to Hawaii about a decade ago and has since returned to the Aloha State to study the music and culture several times since.

"There's just the sweetness of it," he says. "There's a respect for elders and traditions. And just the goodwill of the Hawaiians is really attractive. They are a feel-good kind of people."

MUSIC BUZZ • AROUND TOWN

# You Say Party! We Say Volcanic Cloud



WILDLIFE FISH GRIMKOWSKY

**STRANGE RUMELINGS FROM  
SO4 IN AMSTERDAM, RACY  
LYRICS FROM SMOKEY, AND  
FAREWELL DEVON CLIFFORD**

"Amsterdam I love you but you're bringing me down." So says Clint Frazier, one of two of Shout Out Out Out's power drummers. He is the fuzzy one who makes faces. He is sighing with his hands. I'm sure most of us wish we had his Amsterdam problems, but trust me there are few things more agitating than being delayed coming home to Edmonton just as the scorpion-in-genitals-season (cold) ends, and all this beauty blossoms.

The electro-pop band have been trapped in Europe, living in a tour manager's tiny flat, but are expected home by now, after that pesky Iceland volcano which disrupted European air traffic worse than 9-11.

**THE THIN LAYER OF SOLID GROUND AND ATMOSPHERE  
WE INHABIT IS BASICALLY NOTHING BUT A  
PSORIASIS SCALP SCAB FLOATING BETWEEN  
A BALL OF MOLTEN ROCK AND SUBZERO SPACE.**

I'm sure you've noticed this yourself. But this string of disturbing tectonic disasters in the last few months has certainly gotten me wondering if the world is cracking to pieces. The thin layer of solid ground and atmosphere we inhabit is basically nothing but a psoriasis scalp scab floating between a ball of molten rock and sub-zero space. Um, anyway, maybe I've been smoking a little too much "Amsterdam" myself. It's too bad, though, SO4 is such a clean-cut band of nice guys for the most part. They don't even all drink, and I've never hung around in red light districts with any of them. I mean, imagine what the City Streets would've done with this opportunity! Or CHICKADIVAS!

Great show the other night up at Lakewild Lounge, back in Central City. It was a Pop Echo records special presentation of Brazilian Money and Sans AIDS. Smokey opened up solo for pocket change with an enthralling set, a bit more upbeat than usual, and featuring some character-sung lyrics which rhymed "malar-

key" with "workin' like a dorkie." People were immediately discussing it, wondering if they'd heard it right but the song's about a lazy Albertan and assumes the listener is of a certain intelligence to understand its context. I thought it was a bawd and grown up admission to our culture, myself, and Smokey would be glad to discuss it with anyone.

Brazilian Money, a degree of separation away from the Wicked Awesomes! energized the busy dance floor in a different way with this hard-pounding inventive garage-to-vibe and a pair of boxer shorts you can see in this week's SEEN photo, because we are a SEXUAL NEWSPAPER. Especially liked when Garret Johnson sang we could just stay, we don't have to move... which is one of my favourite truisms about this city. I'll get into their EP next week, but check these guys out when you have a chance.

Sans AIDS, meanwhile, force me to remind you that I am very old, and that they play pure grunge in a way which brought me back to the early '90s, when people this exact same age played similar music, though they all went on to be in country bands and double their pant sizes.

Anyway, thank you. Sans AIDS because you made me really fucking happy, for you are holding onto something pure that many bands, including Nirvana, would mess up by the end and indirectly create Nickelback once the cock of glam and the rising stupidity of our entire civilization got hold of it.

Very sad, sad news about 30-year-old You Say Party! We Say Die! drummer Devon Clifford, who collapsed onstage on the weekend and eventually died in hospital because of an undiagnosed cerebral arteriovenous malformation basically a sleeper birth defect causing massive bleeding in his brain. Though YSP(WSD) is based in Vancouver, musicians all over Edmonton are discussing feeling a special twinge of pathos about the specific setting of Clifford's demise, and suffice it to say all love and sympathies to his family, friends and bandmates, who were set to tour Europe this week, starting in Offenbach, Germany.

This is not a joke, that is a hell of a band name to have at this juncture.



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# Time For A New Take On Getting Old



Two rebels deal with the aging process in Mark Stubbings' new play *Dry the Rain* | PHOTO SUPPLIED

## PLAYWRIGHT MARK STUBBINGS BREAKS STEREOTYPES OF THE ELDERLY IN HIS NEW PLAY

### DRY THE RAIN

Directed by Michael Clark

La Cite Francophone, April 23-May 2 at 7:30 p.m.

### BY STACEY LAWRENCE

Mark Stubbings is thinking beyond his years. Decades beyond. To the age of dementia and Depends. To trading

motor bikes for bingo chips and the family home for a seniors' centre. And he's sharing his thoughts on the subject with us in *Dry the Rain*.

"I think people are afraid," says the young writer. "They're terrified of being put in a retirement home. I think that's the reason why a lot of the things imposed upon the residents—bingo or shuffle board, are really more for children. People want to gloss over what it means to age and its challenges because they know

that they're going to have to deal with it themselves someday."

And sooner than we think. "We're moving into the boomer generation," says Stubbings, "and we're going to have more seniors than we've ever had in the history of the world, so I think it's important to share their story."

*Dry the Rain* is a tale of aging told from the perspective of an elderly couple who really lived. Agnes and Clayton are rebels coping with the

big move to the retirement home. While dealing with the loss of home, memory and bodily function, Clayton rails against the authority of the senior's home while Agnes tries to gracefully accept her new place in the world.

"I've always had an issue with stereotypes that I see of the elderly," says Stubbings. "I think a lot of people tend to forget that their grandparents or even their parents had lives

prize this playwright. Though this is his first play produced by Workshop West, he has produced his own shows for The Fringe and his unique contemporary style has already won him two Sterling Awards and the 2003 Alberta Playwriting Competition Prize.

"It's a tough nut to crack sometimes," says Stubbings on being an Edmonton playwright, "so theatres such as

"I THINK A LOT OF PEOPLE TEND TO FORGET THAT THEIR GRANDPARENTS HAD LIVES TOO AND IN PAST HAVE DONE SOME WILD THINGS."

too and in past have done some wild things. So with Agnes and Clayton there's a history of some criminal activity, of some pretty wild parties and some living on the road. I wanted to create a unique portrayal of elderly characters so they're not so much the grandnia and grandpa handing out Werther's to the kids."

And with that in mind he's created some pretty plumb roles for older actors, which has drawn a cast of talent to his play with John Wright, Patricia Casey and Frank Zotter joining the crew to make this show shine. In fact, Casey, now living in Toronto and has returned to Edmonton specifically to play Agnes. "She just fell in love with it," says Stubbings, "which is a huge compliment to me."

Interest in his work shouldn't sur-

prise this playwright. Though this is his first play produced by Workshop West who are strictly dedicated to producing new works are very, very important in terms of development of local talent.

"I've often had people come out of my plays saying 'I didn't know theatre was like that, which is a really great thing to hear. I don't mean I'm reinventing the wheel as much as it's just not guys in bodkins holding skulls'."

While the majority of his plays "deal with issues that are more immediate that are facing our contemporary culture" Stubbings is not bashing the classics. But "with theatres such as Workshop West and actually all theatres taking the risk on producing new shows, there's an opportunity to create new classics."



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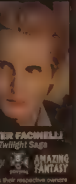
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THEATRE • PREVIEW

# Ignoring Bad News Won't Stop The Apocalypse

THE WORLD IS DOOMED, BUT  
THAT'S NO EXCUSE FOR POOR  
SERVICE IN LADIES WHO LYNCH

LADIES WHO LYNCH

The Living Room Theatre

April 22-25, April 30-May 2 and May 7-9

BY BECKY HALLIDAY

The first act of *The Serial Collector's Ladies Who Lynch*, premiering as a co-production with Azimuth Theatre, takes place in a nameless upscale bistro. That said, playwright Jason Chinn (*Riches, Happy Kitchen and The Lavender Lady*) and director Garrett Spellacy confess that the pseudo-white-garlic tables onstage might look suspiciously like the one we are currently sipping cold drinks around at Café Leva, where both work part-time.

Leva's sun-filtered space populated by twentysomethings in high-end denim seems an unlikely location to discuss impending apocalypse but perhaps reflects our attitude towards it. "I feel we're living in fairly dire times. Every other day you hear that our water supply won't be there in twenty years (or we won't have enough farmland... and we may not be able to support the next genera-



Candace Berlinguette, Nadine Chu and Amy Keating are the Ladies Who Lynch in Azimuth Theatre's latest production. (PHOTO SUPPLIED)

tion, but we're still quite good 'spired," Chinn observes.

Judith (Candace Berlinguette) has decided to combat all that pessimistic white noise by eliminating any form of media from her life. She is eager to tell her "lackeries," Maureen (Nadine Chu) and Francine (Amy Keating) her idea over lunch at their usual spot — a la wasteful (Molly Flood) would ever take their order. Unfortunately when these ladies don't receive "a certain level of service," it is the end of the world. Chinn is fascinated by our obsession

and competition — especially among women — towards having it all to the point of total glass-house: "building up your glass house, as much as you can, even though there are many pressing urgent issues that could cause crashing down at any point."

Chinn and Spellacy watched *The Real Housewives of New Jersey* and women's talk shows and were horrified by how, even in a life of excess, women have to keep trim and tucked. But they received their greatest "beauty" education from local Rivers+plastic surgery tell-all *Men Are*

Stupid... And *They Like Big Boobs* [Judith] wants a total replacement... everything but her brain." Spellacy laughs. The idea that one could be driven to murder over poor customer service is to Chinn not that absurd.

There are a lot of instances where people are murdered [or] killed because we feel entitled to oil [or] water [or] our standard of living.

However, Chinn and Spellacy are refreshingly optimistic about their company's first production in Edmonton's main season. Azimuth has generously offered them a free per-

formance space, mentorship and artistic control. They're producing as but helping us to self-produce. That's a really valuable thing. Another step in the growth of the Edmonton independent theatre community is a real, tangible progression from fringe festival environments. Spellacy says in Edmonton the transition from emerging to professional artist is often laborious as is the process of attracting an audience to an independent main season production. But Spellacy wants to challenge any doom and gloom notions that audiences just don't get. main season fringe shows. Because of the fringe, because of the great festivals that people have here, audiences are actually looking for original unique experiences," he declares. "This is the right city to be doing this. We're not making any money, but we're doing exactly what we want to be doing."

It's heartening to hear these words from Edmonton's hardworking theatre-scholar, graduating, dedicated fine-tuning their work in between making margarita pizzas. The next generation might be wise after all. Plus, Spellacy promises Leva's customers are "generally a lot nicer."

WEBSITE • PREVIEW

## Rapid Fire Turns Up The Heat With New Website



Rapid Fire Theatre gets set to launch new website with party and new videos. (PHOTO SUPPLIED)

FROM THE STAGE TO  
YOUR COMPUTER SCREEN,  
RAPID FIRE THEATRE  
GOES HIGH-TECH

RAPID FIRE INTERNET LAUNCH PARTY

Rapid Fire Theatre with 1011i Outfit

Varscona Theatre, April 24

BY TRENT WILKE

Arlen Konopalski is a busy man. Currently, he is the associate artistic director of Rapid Fire Theatre, a member of improv duo Scratch (with Kevin Gilles), and is undertaking a makeover on Rapid Fire's website. With all that going on, I was interested to know how it all happened and what he is doing right now?

"I'm in my underwear on my couch eating a can of beans."

That is what I get for asking

"I'll start with ex-artistic director Kevin Gilles," Konopalski says. "He wanted us to grow and Amy (Shostak) and I are picking that up and are trying to do just that. It feels a little bit like a different generation in a way because we have a young audience and we realized that we aren't using the Internet to utilize this very well. Amy decided that we should have this new website that was functional, informative and that would enhance our audience by making us more accessible on the Internet."

And Konopalski knows the Internet. With Highwire Films, Konopalski

and Mike Robertson created a video sketch called *Sex Tape* fail which has close to 200,000 hits on YouTube. Having garnered the focus of *Maxim* magazine's online site and being a finalist in *Metro Digital Shorts*, Konopalski understands how to get internet attention, make a sharp video and at the same time knows how it will all benefit Rapid Fire.

"If you talk to anyone in the entertainment industry everyone would agree that the future is Internet," Konopalski says. "It's definitely a place where you can make a name for yourself. We don't have this opportunity in town but we do on the Internet. We can reach an international audience. At the same time, we still want to stay true to the Rapid Fire style that has been created throughout the years. We are shooting 30 sketches over the next few months and I'm looking forward to seeing the feedback. We are ready to kick the Internet's ass."

To promote the site and the release of the first five completed videos, Rapid Fire will be having a party at the Varscona Theatre. There will be give-aways live viewings of the show and musical guests 1011i Outfit live! with all the attention going to wards the Internet, will the stage get jealous?

"I hope they both feed off of each

other," Konopalski says. "We have so much talent that has been lost throughout the years that can do so many things. If anything the show will get better with bigger audiences and attention. When we are at the shows we are at the shows. That's the focus. We will get ideas through

the stage shows that hopefully will feed our videos for years to come."

"And by the way," adds Konopalski, "I'm not actually on my couch in my underwear eating a can of beans, but I am going to do that now."

Thank you for not making me a liar, Arlen.

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# OTELLO

## OPERA • PREVIEW

# Opera Sans Snobbery

PIZZA AND BEER AT THE  
OPERA? BELIEVE IT AS OTELLO  
TAKES THE STAGE IN HOPES OF  
ATTRACTING NEW AUDIENCE

OTELLO

Directed by Brian Deedrick  
Northern Jubilee Auditorium, April 24, 27 and 29  
Sung in Italian with English supertitles.

BY JOSH MARCELLIN

The opera, especially to the uninitiated, can seem exclusive. Even intimidating.

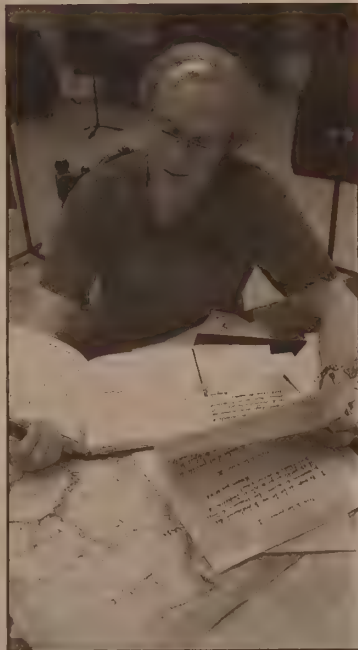
"Invariably, the people who hate opera most are the ones who've never been," says Brian Deedrick, the artistic director for Edmonton Opera. "And they're basing it on some vision they've made up."

The opera is hoping to dispel all snooty preconceptions and court the city's opera virgins to experience Shakespeare and Verdi's *Otello* (Verdi dropped the "h" to echo the Italian pronunciation) at the Jubilee Auditorium.

The "Storm the Stage" event on April 23 aims to tempt the 20 to 40-year-old set with a chance to be on-stage and behind the scenes and mix with cast and crew before opening night. There's also the possibility of playing *Rock Band* with classically trained opera professionals.

This initiative — along with the Explorers Club that offers the college-aged set \$20 tickets with beer and Funky Pickle pizza — is the opera's new attempt at introducing its productions to young would-be art patrons by branding opera as an elevated social event, a stimulating and memorable alternative to the bar or the Cineplex.

"That's really what theatre is all about. It's where people come together and communicate and celebrate the human experience," says John Mac Master, the acclaimed Canadian tenor tackling the title role. "If you can do it with a piece of jalapeno cheese pizza, even better yet."



Artistic director Brian Deedrick prepares for Edmonton Opera's *Otello*. PHOTO BY CRAIG JANZEN

and power of a half-million dollar production like *Otello* will impress first-timers. There is a 56-member cast, including a 40-member chorus, and with the 56-piece Edmonton Symphony Orchestra conducted by Maestro Meena humming in the pit beneath them. They produce a wall

sic villain lingo. "If we do it right, we sing from our guts, and then you get it in the gut. Hopefully I don't make you vomit."

The Edmonton Opera hasn't performed *Otello* in 30 years, although Deedrick says it's been planned for seasons

"DON'T BE SCARED,  
ART WAS NOT MADE FOR THE INTELLECTS  
... IT WAS MADE FOR THE PEOPLE."

And with the hyper-talented all-Canadian cast (with the exception of American Maestro James Meena) it is an experience on a grand scale, promises Mac Master. "There's nothing small about this. Your senses are really being assaulted on many levels by this art form," says Mac Master, adding newbies often think "Shit, that's something new. I thought I've had a grand night out, but whoa — that sucker was something else."

Deedrick promises the sheer scale

of sound that shakes the audience from the front row to the second balcony.

This performance is especially challenging because the cast have to sing not only in Italian (with English supertitles projected above the stage) but they also have to perform entirely un-miked, projecting to 2200 people using only the power of their natural voice.

"It's visceral," promises Gregory Dahl, the former teacher turned baritone playing Shakespeare's Iago.

"(It is) a psychologically gripping story," says Deedrick. "It's got enough sex and violence, and love and passion and hatred — all of those things to keep it going. It's very noble in that way."

Mac Master and Dahl, along with Sally Diblee who's playing the doomed wife Desdemona, want everyone to come experience the power and intensity of *Otello*.

"Don't be scared, art was not made for the intellectuals," says Dahl. "It was made for the people."

ART EXHIBIT • PREVIEW

# Living The Dream In The Land Of Sleep

**IN THE LAND OF SLEEP  
HELPS MIA WEINBERG REALIZE  
HER DREAM OF BECOMING  
A FULL-TIME ARTIST**

**IN THE LAND OF SLEEP**

Artwork by Mia Weinberg  
Muttart Conservatory, until May 13

**BY MARLISS WEBER**

Vancouver artist Mia Weinberg lately lives in the land of sleep. At least, that's the name of her new exhibition at the recently-renovated Muttart Conservatory, and she's created a dreamy land of giant blossoms and faeries and insect-like figures in her photographic work.

Or, more accurately, her "photogrammic" work, as Weinberg doesn't use a camera to create her magical portraits of otherworldly creatures and plants.

"I'm not a photographer," Weinberg says, "but I've always been fascinated by the dark room process. And I've recently gone digital and now I

just see flowers, and that's OK. I like that everyone can bring something of themselves into the interpretation of my pieces."

This exhibit is special to Weinberg, as it marks the beginning of a new phase in her career – and in her life. For the first time since she was a student at Vancouver's Emily Carr University of Art and Design 15 years ago, Weinberg is devoting herself entirely to art.

Meaning, she's finally in a position to quit her day job.

"It's amazing what happens when you just take that leap," Weinberg says. "I made the decision two weeks ago to quit my job, and since then so many wonderful opportunities have come my way."

Like further exhibits in Vancouver and a potentially lucrative venture preserving bridal bouquets in her unique photogram style. And collaborations with other artists, like Edmonton's own Kate Collie.

"Kate and I have been making each

other responded by sending her shots of the distinctive building from her condo window.

"I'm not a sculptor," Weinberg says, "but I did think my work was well-suited to a conservatory because I use plants." She used a clever design the melds city maps and the

veins of leaves, and worked with a master carver to preserve her images on the granite pyramid outside the conservatory.

"That's a bit intimidating, really, when you think about it," she says modestly.

I mean, my pictures will only last

say 175 years, but my image on the granite will be there forever. Archaeologists might find it someday and it will still be there."

As will Mia Weinberg's art career, there is no doubt. This talented artist's work will be on display at the Muttart until May 13.

**I LIKE THAT EVERYONE CAN BRING SOMETHING OF  
THEMSELVES INTO THE INTERPRETATION OF MY PIECES**

use a scanner to create my work."

Weinberg uses natural objects – she's particularly fond of decaying flowers and leaves – and through the magic of her scanner and Photoshop, she creates wonderful dreamlike images, partly impressionistic, partly realistic, that capture imagination and stimulate wild interpretations.

"That's something that's important to me in my work," Weinberg says. "I like that my work is very open to interpretation. Some people see faeries, other people insects. Some people

other back and forth," Weinberg says of the local artist. "I use my scanner to create interesting backgrounds, and Kate, who is a marvelous painter, paints on my pages. It's a terrific, long-distance collaboration."

It was actually indirectly through Collie that Weinberg's work came to the Muttart. In 2008, Weinberg answered a call for submissions for the granite sculpture that now makes its home in front of the Muttart Conservatory. She called her friend Collie to ask about the venue, and Col-

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## DRY The Rain

by Mark Stubbings



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Mia Weinberg uses decaying plant material to create *In the Land of Sleep*. PHOTO SUPPLIED





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# SAVAGE (cont'd from p. 30)

public. My daughter reacted poorly. She did not demand that we break up, but she did let me know that our relationship made her uncomfortable. And she was rightfully upset about some personal information my girlfriend had told me about her. During the past four weeks, my daughter has gradually edged my girlfriend, formerly a close friend of hers, out of her personal life. She has also begun to spend less time with me. She tells me she does not want me to have to choose between her and my girlfriend; although, if she stops spending time with me, that's exactly what she's doing. I know she's upset. But I'm a grown man, and I just want to be happy. And in spite of the age difference, my girlfriend makes me very happy. What can I do to make my daughter more comfortable with my new relationship?

**Father Doesn't Always Know Best**  
P.S. The information my girlfriend shared about my daughter was the name of a young man she was seeing and that my daughter had recently purchased an expensive dress. My girlfriend hardly told me that my daughter was doing something truly dangerous or wrong.

It's nice to know that your girlfriend manages to make you happy "in spite of the age difference." Too many late-middle-aged men succumb to despair in the arms of their much-younger girlfriends. Anyway... What can you do to make your daughter comfortable with your fucking her friend while her friend blabs to you? Nothing. Your daughter may eventually become comfortable with your relationship, FDAKB, but there's nothing you can do to arti-

ficially force up her comfort level. And while emotional blackmail — "My girlfriend makes me happy, but I will sacrifice my happiness for you, darling, if that's what you want..." — may result in your daughter spending more time with you and your girlfriend now, her resentment at being blackmailed will do irreparable damage to your relationship with her over the long run.

So just shut the fuck up, Dad, stop whining, and continue to enjoy the girlfriend in spite of the age difference. Then go apologize to your daughter for (1) keeping the relationship from her for so long (your daughter may be losing sleep over these she told her friend before she found out you were fucking) and (2) the invasion of her privacy that already took place. Then give your daughter the space she needs and the privacy she has a right to.

**Find the Savage Lovecast (my weekly podcast) every Tuesday at [theistranger.com/savage](http://theistranger.com/savage).  
mail@savagelove.net**

## ASTROLOGY: APRIL 22-28 • BY THE KID

# CRUISIN' THE COSMOS

### TAURUS (APRIL 20-MAY 20)

Bein' that you ain't no poles, you get the message it's time to lay your cards out on the table, no matter what you're holdin' in your hand. Yes, it's the moment of truth. You show 'em yours and they show you theirs. Don't be nervous, though. Those buggers are bluffin'!

### GEMINI (MAY 21-JUNE 20)

This weekend you'll feel so worn out you'll want to make a tuze and call it even. Heck, you'll be so plumb-tuckered out you might even do something silly like surrendrin'. Well, you'll be a whole lot happier if you stick to your six-gun, partner. Cause 'yee, when the dust clears, it's only gonna be you left standin'.

### CANCER (JUNE 21-JULY 21)

OK, so you've been enlightened in an epiphany. So what? You think that makes you a "higher" being or someethin'? It may look that way, but only 'cause you put yourself up on a pedestal. And the higher up it is, the higher you're gonna fall when somebody "lower" than you knocks it over!

### LEO (JULY 22-AUG. 22)

OK, let's be honest here: You can be gracious and just, entering into an agreement with your adversary and coming to an arrangement that benefits the both of you. But the truth is you're a corrupt, treac and you won't really be happy unless you can kick their ass, rub their nose in it, point at 'em and shout "In your face!"

### VIRGO (AUG. 23-SEPT. 22)

You seem to think you'll have security if you're always in control of the situation. Hmmm. One of them there is control freaks, huh? Well, swap some control for more co-operation and you'll find that your co-operators will do more work than you ever could. Why don'tcha just let 'em?

### LIBRA (SEPT. 23-OCT. 22)

Albts, Luv, you can fastastate about it, so send someone out to scout it, using woodoo spells to charm it. Put up a cold front to disarm it, come up with cunning schemes to throw it. Feed the jack off it and give it a, hee-hee, bag and spread to it or devotion pray and kneel to it, but don't any book and it'll imply say that real love comes only when you're lookin' the other way.

### SCORPIO (OCT. 23-NOV. 21)

Sometimes that quick 'n' simple solution that slides along the rick of time sort the one to get you out of deep doo-bee. In fact, the more you're sure it's your way out, the deeper you'll get. It's kinda like struggling in quicksand — the more you fight, the faster you're gonna sink.

### SAGITTARIUS (NOV. 22-DEC. 21)

Now that you finally hold the upper hand, you've begun to ask yourself why it all seems so bland. You're in a balanced relationship between equals, love is a two-way street. How can you lose 'em when they're growling at your feet?

### CAPRICORN (DEC. 22-JAN. 19)

Don't rush into anything silly this weekend, swifly. You may think it's all over and the struggle has subsided, but that ain't necessarily so. Unleash further reflection you'll find you haven't reached the end, but at least you're still headed in the same direction. That is unless you make a complete turn, of course.

### AQUARIUS (JAN. 20-FEB. 18)

Whatever it is you're tryin' to get, it's gonna come a lot quicker if you can play-act the proper part to other people. Just make sure you don't get too deep into the method acting, though. If you completely become someone else, they won't see what you've been waiting for when it finally finds its way into the picture.

### PISCES (FEB. 19-MARCH 20)

Wanted: Big fish from small pond for opening in medium-sized lake. On-the-ground training provided. Pay commensurate with experience. Benefits include lots of space to swim in, plenty of room to grow and more to eat. Apply within.

### ARIES (MARCH 21-APRIL 19)

Now that times ain't so tough and things are workin' your way, you wanna enjoy the windfall all by your lonesome. Well, greedy chests, just so you know, there ain't no sure way to put an end to your fortunes than to have the back slap with you. Wait your hoard-o'-ama and let go of your fruits so that new seeds can be sown for you.

You can contact The Kid at [crusinincosmos@gmail.com](mailto:crusinincosmos@gmail.com).



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# Contact Ex When You're Ready To Apologize



SAVAGE LOVE: DAN SAVAGE

**FIFTEEN YEARS AFTER THEY BROKE UP, SHE STILL FIGHTS THE URGE TO CONTACT BOYFRIEND SHE CHEATED ON**

the then-current [now-ex] boyfriend right didn't believe.) I know my reasons are selfish: I want to explain myself, I want to move on, I want to be forgiven. But if he wanted to be in contact with me, he would be. And yet, like a crazed idiot, I still hold out hope that someday he'll contact me or that we'll bump into each other. Should I contact him? Can't Let Go

You should suck it up, CLG.

It's killing you that someone out there might hate your guts (with cause), might think you're scum (because you behaved like scum), and we can safely presume at this stage, is content to have you out of his life (otherwise he would've looked you up on Facebook by now). This bothers you because you're not scum, of course; no person is defined by the two worst mistakes she ever made (I'm referring to (1) cheating and (2) making a false accusation of rape. What would've happened if your then-current [now-ex] boyfriend had gone to the police? Or taken the law into his own hands? Thank God your then-current [now-ex] boyfriend didn't believe you.) I don't think you should contact him.

CLG, not until you're a little more interested in what you could give him (a long-overdue apology) and a little less interested in what he could give you (absolution).

I'm a 27-year-old gay man. I had a really great first couple of dates with a guy, so for the third date I invited him to stay over. I cooked a nice dinner, we watched a movie, and we had a lovely time in bed together. In the morning, we had another room. At one point, he was rimming me, and unexpectedly, unintentionally, I farted in his mouth a little. His reaction was along the lines of "EW! EWWW! EW!" Mine was along the lines of trying to apologize through uncontrollable laughter. I said, "C'mere" and pulled him in to kiss me, and we finished with what I thought was minimal awkwardness. Later in the day, to be cute, and even perhaps start a long-term shared joke, I sent an e-card that read, "I'm sorry for farting in your mouth." I then left town for the weekend, and when I got back I tried to get in touch with him. He sent the following text message: "I'm not sure about this.

yr a sweet guy but i'm dating some other people... i just can't have farts in my mouth. i think i would have handled it a bit more respectfully."

Is a sense of humour about the inevitable off-colour moments too much to expect? I mean, this was one strike you're out, not even a chance to talk it over. He dumped me over TEXT, for fuck's sake! Good riddance, I suppose. But did I really handle this wrong? Flutent Anilingus Result: Termination

You handled this beautifully, FART—that's why you got dumped via text message.

They don't cover this in sex ed, I realize, but the average idiot knows there's just one thing a person wants from someone who's just "unexpectedly" farted in his mouth, even just a little, and it's not an e-card. It's a lengthy, abject, mortified, immediate, and heartfelt apology. And after a rimmed fart—a blessedly rare occurrence—it's the rimmer's response that sets the tone for what comes next. Your guest was horrified and disgusted. When you saw his reaction, FART, you needed to take your

emotional cues from him, make your apologies and reassure him that it wasn't intentional, and express genuine remorse.

Instead, you laughed in his face, pulled him in for a kiss, and sent him a flip e-card. Basically, you did everything you could to give this guy the impression that you're either an inconsiderate asshole incapable of reading another person's emotional cues, FART, or that you may actually be into farts—or worse—and that you intentionally farted in his mouth. I would've dumped you, too.

Yes, a sense of humour about those off-colour moments is not too much to expect. But no relationship progresses to the laughing-off-the-fart-in-your-mouth stage, FART, until after—long after—you've demonstrated to the person you're dating that you're a fundamentally decent, considerate person, worthy of their time and affections.

My wife and I divorced three years ago. Six months ago, I began seeing a good friend of my daughter's. I knew this was dangerous territory, but I really liked this girl. A month ago, we decided to take our relationship

SAVAGE cont'd on p. 29

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## rockabilly defined

A music and fashion subculture started in the mid-late seventies in the UK. Seventies teenagers developed their own dress code based on 1950s American juvenile delinquent novels and Hot Rod B-movies. Putting distance between themselves and the older "Teddy Boys" who attended the same clubs and dances at the time. Their taste in music was for the more primitive hillbilly-rock hybrid "rockabilly" that kicked off in the mid fifties at the same time as its more successful and commercial sibling - "rock and roll". The rockabilly scene still exists today.

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